

Claims

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1. A tape cassette (2,7) for accomodating a supply of printable tape, the tape cassette (2,7) being suitable for being detachably loaded in a tape printing device (1), said tape cassette (2,7) having means for inserting and removing a tape supply into said tape cassette (2,7), and wherein the tape cassette (2,7) is capable of selectively accomodating tape supplies of different tape widths.
2. A tape cassette as claimed in claim 1, wherein the tape is an ink ribbon tape (12) and/or an image receiving tape (4) comprising an image receiving layer and a releasable backing layer.
3. A tape cassette as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the tape is wound onto a bobbin (102,104,106), said bobbin being releasably accomodated on a post (84,86,88) provided within said cassette, said post comprising a datum surface (94) which interacts with a surface (95) of said bobbin such that it defines the position of the bobbin in the axial direction of the post.
4. A tape cassette as claimed in claim 3, wherein the post or the bobbin comprises a rib (92) which mates with an internal flange of the bobbin or the post, so that the bobbin is releasably retained on the post.
5. A tape cassette as claimed in claim 3 or 4, wherein bobbins (102,104,106) with tape supplies of different tape widths have surfaces (95) interacting with said datum surface (94) of said post (84,86,88), wherein the surfaces are positioned so that the centre line of tapes of different width is located in the same plane, independent on the width of the tape.
6. A tape cassette as claimed in one of claims 1 - 5, wherein a spring (112,134,135) is located between a bobbin onto which said tape is wound and a part of the housing of the tape cassette, the spring slipping on said housing and/or on said bobbin and providing back tension in said tape.

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7. A tape cassette as claimed in claim 6, wherein the spring (134) interacts with a flange of said bobbin, and wherein the relative position of the flange with respect to the post and thus the backward tension of the tape provided by the spring depends on the width of the tape.

8. A tape cassette as claimed in claim 6 or 7, wherein the spring (112,135) is unitary with the bobbin or the housing of the tape cassette.

9. A tape cassette as claimed in one of claims 1 - 8, wherein the tape cassette has a housing consisting of a base (40) on which said tape supply can be releasably fixed, the base (40) having a bottom surface extending orthogonally to the center plane of the tape supply, the tape supply being releasably retained on said bottom surface, and wherein the tape supply is freely accessible from the side opposite said bottom surface, so that the cassette has the form of an open chassis without a lid.

10. A tape cassette as claimed in one of claims 1 - 8, wherein the tape cassette has a housing comprising a base (40) on which said tape supply can be releasably fixed, the base (40) having a bottom surface extending orthogonally to the center plane of the tape supply, the tape supply being releasably retained on said bottom surface, and wherein the tape cassette comprises a lid (42) opposite said bottom surface, wherein the distance between said bottom surface and said lid (42) varies with the width of said tape.

11. A tape cassette as claimed in claim 10, wherein the lid (42) or the base (40) comprise a pin (128), which is accommodated in a hole (130) within the base or the lid, and provides a guidance for the lid on the base.

12. A tape cassette as claimed in claim 10 or 11, wherein the lid or the base comprise a clip (48) which can be accommodated on corresponding surfaces of the base or the lid, and secures the lid (42) to the base (40), whereby the respective surface in which the clip interacts depends on the width of the tape.

13. A tape cassette as claimed in one of claims 2 - 12, wherein the ink ribbon tape (12) is provided on a supply spool (30), and its leading end connected to a take-up spool (32), the supply spool (30) and the take-up spools (32) being fixed to a holder (41,120) such that their relative position corresponds to their position when they are inserted in said tape cassette.

14. A tape cassette as claimed in claim 13, wherein said holder (41,120) additionally comprises means for defining the path of said ink ribbon tape (12), such that the path corresponds to the path of the ink ribbon when it is inserted into the tape cassette.

15. A tape cassette as claimed in claim 13 or 14, wherein the ink ribbon supply spool (30) and the ink ribbon take-up spool (32) are releasably secured by said holder (41,120) against rotation, such that the cassette is in an operable state when the ink ribbon is mounted in said tape cassette, but released from the holder.

16. A tape cassette as claimed in claim 15, wherein the ink ribbon supply spool (30) and the ink ribbon take-up spool (32) are fixed to said holder by means of a tear-off tape (122).

17. A tape cassette as claimed in one of claims 13 - 16, wherein said holder comprises a lid (120) covering at least a part of said tape cassette.

18. A tape cassette as claimed in one of claims 1 - 8, wherein the tape cassette has a housing comprising a base (40) on which said tape supply (70) can be releasably fixed, the base (40) having a bottom surface extending parallel to the center plane of the tape supply (70), wherein the tape cassette comprises a lid (42) opposite said bottom surface, whereby the tape supply (70) is releasably fixed to the lid (42).

19. A tape cassette as claimed in claim 18, wherein the lid (42) comprises material between the tape supply (70) and the outer surface of the lid (42) such that the distance between the bottom of the tape cassette and the surface of the lid (42) opposite the base is independent on the width of said tape.

20. A tape cassette (2,7) for accomodating a supply of printable tape, the tape cassette being suitable for being detachably loaded in a tape printing device (1), wherein the tape cassette (2,7) has a housing comprising a base (40) on which said tape supply can be releasably fixed, and a lid (42) fixed to said base (40), wherein the lid (42) is pivotally mounted to said base by means of a hinge (46).

21. A tape cassette as claimed in claim 20, wherein the base (40), the lid (42), and the hinge (46) are unitary.

22. A tape supply unit (30) comprising a wound tape (4,12), the tape unit being suitable for being detachably loaded in a tape cassette (2,7) and/or in a tape printing device (1), wherein the respective windings of the tape are held together by means of a strip (60) of wax or adhesive provided on the axial end or ends of said tape supply unit.

23. A tape supply unit (70) comprising a wound image receiving tape (4), the tape unit being suitable for being detachably loaded in a tape cassette (2,7) and/or in a tape printing device (1), wherein the image receiving tape (4) comprises an image receiving layer of a first width and a releasable backing layer (9) of a second width, the second width being larger than the first width, and wherein the axial end or ends of the tape supply unit are scuffed such that the respective windings of the tape (4) are held together.

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